

Montgomery County  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Aging and Disability Services

## Community Support Network News

### Save the Date for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Resource Fair

Winter 2006

*Inside this issue:*



### “A Treasure of Resources”

*Featuring products, services and resource information  
for children and adults with disabilities.*

**Date:** Wednesday April 26, 2006

**Time:** Doors are open from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**Location:** University of Maryland-Shady Grove Center  
9630 Gudelsky Drive (Building II)  
Rockville, MD 20850

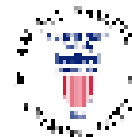
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**ADMISSION & PARKING ARE FREE!!**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE FAIR SPONSOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
AGING & DISABILITY SERVICES  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK  
240) 777-1216 OR TTY (240) 777-1217



Helping to Make Your Community Links



JANUARY 2006						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2006						
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MARCH 2006						
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## Calendar of Events

The Calendar of Events usually listed here was not available at the time of publication. For more information on events in your area, check out these websites:

Montgomery County's Conference and Visitor's Bureau - [Www.cvbmontco.com](http://www.cvbmontco.com)

City of Rockville, Maryland - <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/index.html>

City of Takoma Park, Maryland - <http://www.takomagov.org/index.html>

City of Gaithersburg, Maryland - <http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/>



## Disaster Preparedness For People With Disabilities



Being prepared for emergencies can reduce the fear, panic, and inconvenience that surrounds a disaster.

### *Check for hazards in the home.*

During and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

### *Be ready to evacuate.*

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

### *Have disaster supplies on hand.*

Flashlight with extra batteries.  
Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries.  
First aid kit and manual.  
Essential medicines

Emergency food and water.  
Nonelectric can opener.  
Cash and credit cards  
Sturdy shoes.

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Maintain a list of the following important items and store it with the emergency supplies. Give a copy to another family member and a friend or neighbor.

Special equipment and supplies, e.g., hearing aid batteries

Current prescriptions names and dosages

Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacist

Detailed information about the specifications of your medication regime

*Create a self-help network of relatives, friends or co-workers to assist in an emergency.*

If you think you may need assistance in a disaster, discuss your disability with relatives, friends, and co-workers and ask for their help. For example, if you need help moving or require special arrangements to receive emergency messages, make a plan with friends. Make sure they know where you keep emergency supplies. Give a key to a neighbor or friend who may be able to assist you in a disaster.

*Contact your local emergency information management office now.*

Many local emergency management offices maintain registers of people with disabilities so they can be located and assisted quickly in a disaster.

Wearing medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability may help in case of an emergency.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

*If you have a severe speech, language, or hearing disability:*

- When you dial 9-1-1, tap space bar to indicate TDD call.
- Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.
- Keep a flashlight handy to signal whereabouts to other people and for illumination to aid in communication.
- Remind friends that you cannot completely hear warnings or emergency instructions.
- Ask them to be your source of emergency information as it comes over their radio.
- If you have a hearing ear dog, be aware that the dog may become confused or disoriented in an emergency. Store extra food, water and supplies for your dog.

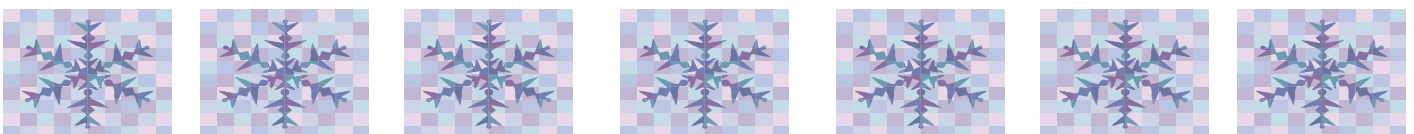
*Planning for Evacuation*

People with disabilities have the same choices as other community residents about whether to evacuate their homes and where to go when an emergency threatens. Listen to the advice of local officials. Decide whether it is better to leave the area, stay with a friend or go to a public shelter. Each of these decisions requires planning and preparation.

*If you need a wheelchair:*

Show friends how to operate your wheelchair so they can move you if necessary. Make sure your friends know the size of your wheelchair in case it has to be transported.

*-from <http://www.fema.gov/library/disprep.shtm>*



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## UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation

The MAMSI Children's Foundation is being expanded from the Mid-Atlantic states to a national focus. As such, the MAMSI Children's Foundation is now called the UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation.

Residents of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Delaware and North Carolina will continue to send their applications to the address listed in the grant application below until December 31, 2005. Beginning January 1, 2006, new applications can be submitted online at the new UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation Web site which can be found at [www.unitedhealthcarechildrensfoundation.org](http://www.unitedhealthcarechildrensfoundation.org) or mailed to an address on the application.

The Children's Foundation was established in December 1999 to provide financial assistance to families with children age 16 or younger who have health care needs not covered by their private health insurance. To be eligible, families must live in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, or North Carolina and be covered by a commercial health insurance plan.

The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization funded by contributions from MAMSI Health Plans and its employees, as well as the general public. It operates independent of MAMSI Health Plans; policy and grant decisions are made by a six-member Board of Directors comprised of Geni Dunnells, Donald Hammett, Dr. Miguel Macaoay, Dr. Michele Michael, John Murdock, Esq. and Creighton Schneck.

Since its inception in 1999, the Foundation has provided assistance to 250 children. While the Foundation is supported principally by MAMSI Health Plans and its employees, other contributions are important in helping to meet the increasing number of requests for assistance. Grants up to \$5,000 are paying for speech therapy, physical therapy and psychotherapy sessions, and for medical equipment such as wheelchairs, custom body braces and hearing aids. Several awards have helped defray the costs of experimental treatments. The Board follows two basic considerations:

- Will the medical service benefit the child?
- Is the cost a significant burden on the family's financial resources?

To apply for assistance, submit a completed application, which can be found online at <http://www.mamsi.com/s/am/cf/application.pdf>. For further information, contact BarbaraKay Smerko, Executive Director, at 301-838-5613.

*-from www.mamsi.com*

## Transition Website for Maryland Students and Their Families

The State of Maryland has a website specific to students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to adult services and their families. The [www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org) website is a project of the Maryland Interagency Transition Council. The Council "consists of up to 21 members including representatives from eleven State agencies, nine members with relevant interest or expertise appointed by the Governor, and a student representative."

The website has information about transition, the Council, different grants and initiatives, and a list of key people that assist with transition in the State. The website also includes links to other transition related services such as: assistive technology, basic transition information, college disability services, disability links, employment, graduation requirements, health insurance, independent living, MD State agencies, National links, parent supports, self determination/ self advocacy, and transportation. The website is made possible by grants from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and the Maryland State Department of Education through funding from the US Office of Education. For more information, visit the website at [www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org).



## Reminder about the Montgomery County Prescription Plan



Back in September 2004, Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan announced a new discount prescription drug card plan to help Montgomery County residents save money on prescription medications. AdvancePCS, a division of Caremark Rx, of Nashville, Tennessee, distributed free discount drug cards to every Montgomery County household, through an agreement with the National Association of Counties (NACo). County residents are able to use their “Montgomery Rx” card at participating pharmacies and save an average of 20 percent off the retail price of commonly prescribed medications.

With the Montgomery RX card, County residents can visit more than 103 participating pharmacies in Montgomery County, including both chain stores and independently owned pharmacies. There is no enrollment fee for the card and it can be used by any resident, regardless of age, income level or existing health coverage. The card is not insurance, but provides a discount off the retail price of prescription medications. Higher discounts will be available on select medications, as well as high-tech and injectable drugs.

Unlike the drug discount cards being offered by Medicare, the Montgomery Rx card is available to residents of all ages and is easy to use. The card is simply presented at participating pharmacies and the discount is given at the time of purchase. Individuals with insurance coverage for prescription drugs may still save money on drugs the insurance plan doesn’t cover.

The Montgomery Rx prescription discount cards were mailed out to over 200,000 households in December 2004. If you are a County resident and have not received a card, the free discount cards can be found at all County libraries, regional service centers, County health and human services locations and at participating pharmacies throughout Montgomery County.



## New Group for Adults with Asperger’s Syndrome



Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) is a developmental disorder characterized by impairments in social interaction and repetitive behavior patterns. Some individuals with AS have difficulty with relationships and communication. Once they recognize their difficulty with expressing emotion and developing relationships, they can learn effective ways to cope with AS. Talking with other “Aspies” can be therapeutic, as well as participating in therapist-lead social groups. Social stories teach Aspies about appropriate behaviors and rules for the community. Opportunities to obtain educational and vocational training are equally important for individuals with AS to succeed in their communities.

The Greater Washington area has several support groups for parents of children with AS. Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers children and adolescent social skills groups. Many adult Aspies feel that there is a lack of services available for their needs. Some local Aspies have therefore created a support for adults Aspies. **Asperger Adults of Greater Washington** was founded to reduce isolation among the Aspie community, organize social activities, and discuss AS policy issues. Members are knowledgeable about local AS resources, including support groups and therapists. The group meets monthly and maintains ongoing dialogue on their listserv. For more information about Asperger Adults of Greater Washington, visit <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/dcaspie>. Their future Web site domain will be [www.AAGW.net](http://www.AAGW.net). Member names and remarks are confidential and there is no fee to join. New members are welcome!



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## Sleepaway Camp for Children and Adults with Disabilities



The meteorologists may be talking about wind chill factors, but it's not too early to start talking about summer camp. This is the perfect time of year to start researching various summer camps and introducing yourself and your child to the idea of sleepaway camp. Many camps will reach their maximum enrollment by the spring, so we have prepared some helpful information about choosing a sleepaway camp, preparing yourself and your child for sleepaway camp, and contacting local sleepaway camps for children and adults with disabilities.

When choosing a sleepaway camp, there are many questions that you can and should have for camp staff. Kidshealth.org has some suggested tips for choosing an appropriate camp for children. Camps may be inclusive, for campers with general special needs, or specialized for a specific illness or disability. Evaluate your needs for program length: are you interested in a program for the duration of the summer or a shorter camp session? What are your priorities for camp and do you have specific goals to achieve this summer? What is the intake process and what can campers expect on check-in day? What are the qualifications and training requirements for staff? How does staff handle behavior management? What is the supervision ratio for campers to staff? Are family members allowed to visit camp during the session? Will staff be awake overnight or do they sleep in the same room as campers?

The idea of sleepaway camp can be overwhelming for first time campers. A day camp, weekend respite, or a sleepover at a family member's home may be stepping stones before taking the plunge with sleepaway camp. After coordinating many family vacations, Maria Dudish decided that her daughter, Tara, deserved a summer camp experience of her own. She advises parents that "you have to believe that this is right for your child." Maria thought that this was an important step in Tara's journey of independence and that sleepaway camp helped to prepare Tara to live in her current adult residence. Tara gained exposure to new people and age-appropriate activities. Maria said that summer should be considered a time to build upon skills and abilities in planning for your or your child's future.

Katherine Dwyer has enrolled her son, Brian, in different sleepaway camps over the years. Last summer he had a positive experience at Camp Fairlee Manor (see below) and she would like to enroll him for a longer session next summer. She was concerned that staff would not be able to handle some of Brian's challenging behaviors, so she visited during the spring for staff and Brian to get acquainted. This visit made her more comfortable and enabled staff to learn about Brian's behaviors and needs. In the weeks leading up to camp, Katherine showed Brian pictures of camp and developed a social story about going to camp.

It is important to provide all relevant information to camp staff. Maria Dudish recommends that parents be honest and accurate about behaviors and abilities. This will assist staff and campers with a positive transition. When packing for camp, label your name or your child's name on all personal belongings. Ask staff about spending money for outings, communication and adaptive devices, and medication administration. Katherine Dwyer recommends writing down food likes and dislikes, activity preferences, sleep routines, toileting issues, and allergies on an index card. This quick reference guide can assist staff until they get to know the camper better.



Financial assistance may be available through service organizations such as The ARC, United Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy Association, rolling access providers or respite finances. Scholarships may also be available from religious institutions, community organizations, and fraternal organizations. This funding will not be available for long, so apply for scholarships as soon as you are registered for camp.

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The American Camping Association has an extensive listing of sleepaway camps at [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org). In addition, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Community Support Network (240-777-1216) can assist you in learning about nearby camp opportunities. Listed below are a few of the local sleepaway camps for individuals with disabilities.

Melwood's **Kamp A-Kom-Plish** is for children and teens, with and without disabilities, aged 8 to 16. This inclusive camp is located in Nanjemoy, Maryland. Some of their activities include aquatics, horsemanship and horseback riding, sports, arts, ropes courses, and theme days. Sessions are 6 days and the staff supervision ranges from 1:1 to 1:8. For more information, contact [www.kampakomplish.com](http://www.kampakomplish.com) or 301-870-3226.

**Camp Greentop** is located in Catoctin Mountain National Park in Thurmont, Maryland. Campers range from children as young as 7 to adults and includes individuals with physical and multiple disabilities. Camp Greentop provides a traditional, rustic camp experience that includes swimming, arts and crafts, nature, music, adventure, sports and games, and horseback riding. The adult vacation program offers trips for individualized interests and abilities. All campers must be able to be successful in a 2:1 camper to counselor ratio. If 1:1 services are required at all times, an additional fee will be applied to camp tuition and these spaces are limited. Visit their website at [www.campgreentop.org](http://www.campgreentop.org) for call 410-323-0500 for details.

**Camp Atlantic** is a private, residential summer camp providing children, teenagers and adults with mental and physical disabilities a safe and fun vacation at Bethany Beach, Delaware. The camp offers separate youth and adult programs that focus on self confidence and peer socialization in a beach community. The Summer Senior Program is designed for campers 18 and older. Senior campers participate in age appropriate activities and work together to maintain their home in an interdependent environment. The Youth and Teen Program is designed for campers under age 18. This program focuses on independence, sharing appropriate interests with peers, and budgeting chore money. For more information, visit their website at [www.campatlantic.org](http://www.campatlantic.org) or call 1-866-429-7878.

Easter Seals Disability Services operates **Camp Fairlee Manor** near Chestertown, Maryland. Campers from age 6 and up participate in campfire sing-a-longs, fishing, swimming, boating, nature walks, and arts and crafts. Camp Fairlee Manor is an approved Respite Youth Camp provider with the Autism Waiver. Despite having a difficult one-day transition, Katherine Dwyer was delighted to learn that Brian adjusted to camp and eventually participated in all camp activities. When she picked Brian up at the end of his session, his staff was enthusiastic about Brian's positive camp experience. Brian has been calmer and less aggressive since camp, as noted by his school staff and his family. For more information about Camp Fairlee Manor, visit their website at [www.de.easterseals.com](http://www.de.easterseals.com) or call 410-778-0566. Easter Seals also offers adult travel trips and weekend respite camp for children and adults with disabilities from October to May.

Sleepaway camp can be a positive experience for campers and family members. It may surprise you to see the options that are available for different ages and different abilities. At the time of this newsletter distribution, many camps are receiving applications and filling up for summer 2006. Hopefully these suggestions will assist you in choosing and preparing for sleepaway camp for yourself or your child. Good luck and have a great summer!

- Information and Article compiled by CSN staff Amy Gold.



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Montgomery County  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Aging and Disability Services  
Community Support Network  
11 N. Washington Street  
Suite 450  
Rockville, Maryland 20850



## Free Educational Seminars For Parents And Caregivers Of Individuals With Developmental Disabilities

Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (MCDHHS), in collaboration with the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA), is pleased to sponsor seminars for parents and caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities. All seminars are free for participants, however **registration is required**. The following seminars are coming up:

Tuesday	January 10, 2006	Social & Recreational Programs	6:45 p.m.—9 p.m.
Tuesday	February 7, 2006	Vocational & Life Skills Programs	6:45 p.m.—9 p.m.
Tuesday	March 14, 2006	Guardianship	6:45 p.m.—9 p.m.

For more information or to register, please call 240-777-1216 or TTY 240-777-1217. Space is limited. If you require assistance in order to participate, please call 240-777-1216 one week prior to the seminar date.

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